

Jarvis (Sol.)

EMPLOYMENT FOR PATIENTS

IN THE

British Lunatic Asylums.

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MECHANICAL AND OTHER EMPLOYMENTS FOR
PATIENTS IN THE BRITISH LUNATIC ASYLUMS.

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ONE of the most noticeable things which an American finds in visiting the county and borough lunatic asylums of England, is the quietness and loneliness of the wards during the daytime. On inquiry as to the cause, he is told that most of the patients are engaged in various occupations on the farm, and the grounds about the house, in the garden, and in the work-shops. Going out of the hospital, he finds men every where at work, digging, hoeing, shoveling, raking, wheeling, performing all sorts of labor connected with horticulture and agriculture, and apparently as correctly and sanely, and certainly as quietly and steadily, as sane men do similar things, in the fields and gardens elsewhere.

On farther examination, he finds shops of many kinds, where carpenters, blacksmiths, cabinet makers, tinmen, shoemakers, engineers, tailors, plumbers, matmakers, upholsterers, &c., are engaged in these and other mechanical occupations. I found these in all the public asylums I visited: they seem to be common and perhaps universal throughout the

kingdom, for it is the acknowledged policy of those who have the general administration of the insane, and of those who have the special management of the asylums, to employ the patient's body and brain, his limbs and his mind as much as possible, in a sane way and on sane subjects, and for some real purpose, to which he can give his attention. They find this generally can be done the most easily and effectively in such occupations as had been most familiar and agreeable to the patient when in health, or those which, they suppose, will be the most attractive to him, when his mind or affections are deranged.

Gradually and cautiously, in the beginning, the experiments were tried of inducing patients, who had before been left to themselves in the wards, now to go to the shops and engage in a series of operations with the hands, that also required the coöperation or the direction of the brain. At first the quiet and very manageable and manifestly harmless patients, who had some mental activity, were taken to the shops, and put to work. When they found, that these went willingly to their several employments and seemed to be pleased with the opportunity of varied exercise, they added some of those who were more excitable and apparently less safe in the use of tools and in whose hands they had not, at first, dared to place sharp and dangerous instruments. But it was found, that these also went gladly to their work and seemed gratified with the confidence that entrusted such tools in their hands. Then also others of the opposite class, the torpid and the demented, and especially those who were approaching dementia, were taken from the wards to the shops and put to work. These if not willingly, or if not by any active will on their own part in favor of the proposal, yielded to it, at least, with little or no active resistance, and went to the work. Many and various influences and motives combined to induce the patients of all mental conditions to engage and persevere in the several occupations offered to them. The authority of the governing power, the law and the officer, the tact and persuasion of the attendants, the influence of the ready upon the slow, all these and many other

motives coöperated in leading them from the wards to the scenes and places of labor. The moral discipline of the general industry, the influence of the kind, judicious and appropriate leader, who superintended the operations whether in shop or abroad, and the sympathy and example of other patients who were working in the same way and in the same room or place, operated, in great degree, to overcome any restlessness, to keep down any uprising spirit, to restrain vagaries of thought and hold their minds to the work before them.

It certainly required much teaching and guidance, much coaxing and even urgency to induce the dull and torpid to awake their sleeping thoughts, and apply their inactive minds to any thing that required continued attention. Nevertheless this was done everywhere, and in many cases that promised little or nothing in the advance. There were some very manifestly demented patients, with as little apparent power of mental action as living humanity ever presents even in its lowest developments or repressions; these were at work carrying on simple processes, that required little or no thought, certainly no comprehension of plan, and no complication of ideas, but which brought into action all the mental power they possessed. And they were working apparently contentedly and more than contentedly, for they seemed to enjoy their occupation. One man was wheeling gravel from a bank of earth to a place of deposit, at another side of the yard. He appeared to have hardly more thought than his barrow, yet he went to and fro, trundling his vehicle as mechanically as his wheel rolled round, waiting for it to be filled at one end and depositing his load at the other end of his journey, without mistake, for hours successively.

I saw at the asylum at Powick, in Worcestershire, an idiot busily at work in the shoe-shop. He was twenty years old when he was brought there. He had been an idiot from his birth and had never been taught to do any mechanical work before he came there. Nevertheless, Dr. Sherlock, the Superintendent, taking counsel of his success in other cases of similar if not so hopeless a form, undertook to set him to work

in the shoe-shop. But the director of the shop, who was also one of the attendants said, that none could be more unpromising at first, and for a long period ; it required the close and persevering teaching of several months, six, I think, to get the man to give his attention to any instruction and perform any, even the slightest and simplest process, by direction, and repeat it when asked or by his own volition. But when he had gained the power to do any simple thing, and could remember how to do it again, and rouse sufficient intellect to carry it through, he had gained at least a starting point, and he learned more easily and less slowly thereafter : but it was two years before he was able even to peg the bottom of a shoe, without continual supervision and direction. Then he had made such progress in his education, that when the shoe was put on the last, and the sole cut to the proper shape and laid on it, and the pegs laid by his side, and the awl and hammer placed in his hands, he could make the holes, put the pegs into them and drive them down, and repeat this, until he had gone all round the sole of the shoe, and then he would wait for a new direction. At length he acquired a power and even a facility of doing all of this without supervision, and then he added to this the power to put on the heels of proper thickness, and then of trimming the sides, and smoothing and polishing the surface and finishing the whole for use.

I do not know how long he had been at work when I saw him. He seemed to be about twenty-six or twenty-eight years old, and if so, he had been in the shop six or eight years. But he was then working apparently as contentedly and certainly as steadily as sane men work in other shoe-shops. Indeed, he seemed to be more than contented. He was evidently pleased with being there, and with the success of his labors. He smiled pleasantly when I looked at his shoes and said, " they were well made, and would be worn and do good service." I was told that he worked there constantly, about ten hours a day, and always in the same manner as he presented at my visits.

He was not a skillful workman : he was not expected to be. He had not the acuteness of the perceptive faculties, nor the

accurate power of discrimination, nor the nice exactness of co-adaptation, nor yet the delicacy of muscular control, that are necessary to make one skillful in mechanical workmanship. He was naturally and necessarily a coarse workman, for his organization had made him such. The shoes which he made were coarse brogans: but for their purpose and of their kind, they were good and well made: the upper-leather and the several pieces of the sole and heel were all well put together: no necessary part or process was omitted, nothing needed was left undone, and Dr. Sherlock felt confident that he would carry through the whole series of processes committed to him, and make a shoe good of its kind, with about the same certainty as other and sane men ordinarily do.

Without this training or some other of similar adaptation to his feeble powers, and this perseverance corresponding to his mental inactivity, this man probably would have been left to himself to pass a life of mere passivity in the wards of the hospital, vegetating with scarcely a thought and little or no muscular action. Yet he is a type of a class, which the English managers of lunatic asylums have endeavored, with good success, to rouse from a torpidity approaching mental death, up to some degree of life, and to give that life a convenient and useful direction and make its force available.

In the same shop with the idiot shoemaker, there were other patients at work in the same way. Most if not all of these were brighter than he was. They may have been troubled with mania, which was for the time repressed, or with dementia but for the moment giving place to life, but they showed nothing that would reveal to the unpracticed visitor that they were insane.

In other shops there were carpenters, cabinet-makers, blacksmiths, tailors, tinmen, plumbers, &c., busily employed. These were patients of the asylum, some were insane in various ways and in various degrees, and some were demented; but they were performing their several parts with the same quietness and attentiveness to the work in their hands, and apparently with the same success that I noticed in the shoe-shop. They seemed to be as much interested in

the business assigned them and as attentive to the several processes, and to use their tools with as much care and safety as other and sane men do in the outer world, and as far as I could see, with as much skill as men of their degree of general or special culture and practice in these handicrafts do, in other and similar shops. Yet it can hardly be believed that this apparent degree of skill was real: it is not to be supposed that an insane or demented mechanic, with a weakened or a disturbed or disturbable brain and nervous system, with duller perceptive faculties, slower reasoning power or unbalanced mind, can have that discipline and control of his muscular actions which is needful to make a good mechanic.

I inquired everywhere, whether this employment of the insane, as carpenters, blacksmiths, &c., and entrusting them with sharp tools and dangerous means was safe, and I was universally told that it was. I heard of only one instance of any harm growing out of the practice, and that proved to be of no serious consequence. It did not, in the minds of the Commissioners in Lunacy or of the managers of asylums, have any weight against the system, nor lessen their confidence in the propriety and feasibility of the general adoption of mechanical occupations among the means of treatment of the insane.

It is very probable, even quite certain, that the superintendents use all due discrimination in the selection of patients for the shops. They know the mental state, the propensities and the liabilities of those who are under their care, and would naturally hesitate about putting sharp instruments into the hands of some more than others, and would refrain from giving them to some, whom, from their own knowledge of them personally, or from their familiarity with others in similar condition, they supposed to be untrustworthy. Nevertheless they do entrust such tools to a much larger class than the world, inexperienced in such matters, would think safe. There were men in the cabinet-makers' and carpenters' shops, who were excitable when in the world abroad and even in the wards of the asylum, and from their language and manner,

they might seem to strangers to be dangerous, if they had the means and opportunity of doing harm.

I discovered no difference of opinion among all who were interested in, or connected with, lunatic asylums, as to the safety, advantage and propriety of employing patients as artisans. All agreed that it was advantageous for the institutions, and profitable for the inmates. The only difference of opinion was, that some thought it best that the attendants should be mechanics, who should attend to their several wards and patients while in the house, and go to their appropriate shops when they went to work and there superintend those who were engaged in the employment familiar to them. As the classification of the patients in the hospital would not be on the basis of trade or occupation, the carpenters in one ward and the shoemakers in another, and the farmers in a third, but according to form and state of disease, it follows, that, by this system the attendant must have the charge of one set of patients while in the house, and of another set while in the shops. This is the plan adopted at the Worcestershire Asylum. But some others thought, that two different sets of men should be engaged, one to have the charge of all the patients, while in the wards, in the night and in the non-working hours, and the few, the aged, feeble, and unwilling, who do not work, during the day. These need no skill as mechanics; but another set should be artisans, blacksmiths, tailors, &c., and these should have the charge of the patients and the work of the shops, but no responsibility for the lunatics while they were in the house.

In all sorts of ways, and with as large a variety of means of employment as could be brought into the asylums, the superintendents send as many to the shops, the grounds, the gardens, the farm, the stables, &c., as they can induce to work. Of course, there are some in every establishment of this sort, who can not be persuaded to work or occupy themselves in any way. The very aged, the feeble, the sick, the paralytic can not work. Some are too excitable and doubtless some are too torpid, some may have too little intellect to comprehend any process, and some are able and intelligent

but unwilling. But making all these deductions, the managers have been able to induce about two-thirds and often more to engage in some kind of labor, and sometimes this proportion has run up as high as ninety per cent. of all, yet this is a rare success, and due to a favorable combination of circumstances and conditions that may not be expected in the usual course of hospital life. In the reports of a large portion of the English county and borough asylums, printed within the last twenty, and mostly within the last ten years, patients are stated to be employed in the following capacities, occupations and spheres :

M E N .

Clerk,	Garden,	Coir Picker,
Messenger,	Grounds,	Hatter,
Gate Porter,	Roadway,	Knitter,
House Porter,	Stable,	Lace Maker,
Town Porter,	Brickmaking,	Mat Maker,
Aid in Galleries,	Limekiln,	Mop Maker,
Aid in Store Rooms,	Quarry,	Oakum Picker,
Aid in Kitchen,	Stone Shed,	Printer,
Aid in Coal House,	Carpenter,	Shoemaker,
Aid in Superintend-	Mason,	Straw Plaiter,
ent's House,	Slater,	Tailor,
Baker and Brewer,	Painter,	Tinman,
Furnacemen,	Plumber,	Tanner,
Wood Cutter,	Glazier,	Weaver,
Grinding Corn,	Engineer Shop,	Wheelwright,
Mangling,	Basket Maker,	Whitesmith,
Turning Washing	Blacksmith,	Upholsterer,
Machine,	Blanket Quilting,	Cooper,
Attendant,	Book Binder,	Engraver,
Organist,	Brush Maker,	Glue Maker.
Farm,	Cabinet Maker,	

W O M E N .

Kitchen,	Aiding Attendant,	Making Hats,
Peeling Potatoes,	Garden,	Making Lace,
Washing,	Weeding,	Making Shoes,

Ironing,	Picking Fruit,	Making Stocks,
Mangling,	Farm,	Making Vests,
Folding and Mend-	Haying,	Needle Work,
ing hose,	Dairy,	Netting,
Mending men's	Roadway,	Picking Coir,
clothes,	Fancy Work,	Picking Flock,
Mending women's	Plaiting Straw,	Quilting,
clothes,	Making Bonnets,	Shoe Binding,
Cleaning,	Making Cloth Boots,	Knitting.
Cleaning Galleries,	Making Gloves,	

It is not to be supposed that all of these are pursued in any one asylum, perhaps not half of them are found in any single asylum. There may be and probably are other occupations in which patients are sometimes engaged, but not mentioned in the reports.

The officers keep a daily record of the manner and time in which every patient is occupied. This record is kept in a book, and in some, perhaps in all the hospitals, this is condensed into a table every week, and again every month, and a copy sent to the Board of Commissioners of Lunacy in London.

Most of the reports include either condensed abstracts of the records of the whole year, showing the average number engaged in each occupation through the twelve months, or they give specimens to show how many were employed in each way on the days, weeks, or months selected. Several of them state also the number unemployed, and the reasons for their being left in the wards.

The following are selected from the many annual reports of the asylums, whose names are at the head of the columns, taking one year of each series:

NUMBER OF MALES EMPLOYED IN SEVERAL ASYLUMS.

	AVERAGE THROUGH THE YEAR.				AVERAGE AT SPECIFIED TIMES.			
	Sussex.	Dorset	Surry.	Hampshire.	Launcester.	Prestwich.	Rainhill.	Chester.*
Farmers,	30	25	12	19.25	77	68.75	61	43.3
Gardeners,			87	25	10			
Bakers,	1		2	3.4		3	2	
Brewers,	2			2	3	1		
In Kitchen,	1		7	1	4	6		4.6
In Laundry,	1		12	8.75				
In Office,				1				
House Porters,	1	1		2				
Store Porters,			1	2		1	2	11.3
Coal Porters,	5		6					
Cleaning Galleries,	5				98.5		30	
Cleaning Furniture,		19	16		32	30		10.6
Cleaning Wards,	35		57					
Cutting Wood,				75				
Carpenters,	4	3	4	1.5	6	2	4	3
Bricklayers,	1		5	1.5	1	1	4	
Painters,		1	1	2.75		5		6
Plumbers,	3				2		1	
Glaziers,								
Engineer's Aid,	3	3	1	5.5		5	6	2.6
Blacksmiths,			1		2		2	
Tailors,	9	4	15	4.75	12	4	8	
Shoemakers,	10	4	11	6.5	9		9	8
Tinmen,								1
Upholsterers,			1			11.5		
Weavers,					2			
Bookbinders,					3			
Picking Oakum,				63.5				
Picking Flock,		6			5.75			
Mat Makers,	7		7		4			
Turner,								
Picking Coir,			9				2	
Mop Makers,			1					
Breaking Stones,								4.5
Crushing Sand,					10			
Pumping,					12			
Other in-door work,					30.25			

UNEMPLOYED.								
Excited with Restraint,					2.25		4	
Excited without Restraint,						2.5		
Excited in seclusion,						4.5		1.3
Excited without seclusion,					7.25	6		
Sick,							8	
Sick in bed,					45	88		10
Quiet,							23	
Aged and infirm,							5	
Too low spirited,							8	
Too little mind,							6	
Able but unwilling,								

* The returns of the Chester Asylum include only the forenoons. All the others include both forenoon and afternoon.

NUMBER OF FEMALES EMPLOYED IN SEVERAL ASYLUMS.

	AVERAGE THROUGH THE YEAR.				AVERAGE AT SPECIFIED TIMES.			
	Sussex.	Dorset	Surry.	Hampshire.	Lancaster.	Prestwich.	Rainhill.	Cheshire.*
House Work.....	.40..	.2	..	.5...	.....	.....	.....	.....
Cleaning6.5...	.....	.....	.2.	.....
Cleaning Wards171.3*	.27.5	.41.	.17.
In Kitchen,.....	.12..	.3	.8	.....	.10...	.8.75	.9.5	.6.
Peeling Potatoes.....16†..	.....	.6*	.....
Washing11.	.....
Mangling.....4.	.....
Ironing10	.....
Folding
Laundry18	.45	.38..	.51.3	.36	.....	.25.
Laundry & Wash House,.....	.35..	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
In Superintendent's house.....3.3
Needle Room,.....27	.....	.58.25	.....	.....	.64.5	.....
Needle and Fancy Work,.....	.65..	.....	.175	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Quilting and Sewing,....136.3†	.19.75	.....	.47.
Knitting,.....5	.....	.....	.....	.....	.6.	.....
Knitting and Netting....20†..	.11.25	.....	.5.4
Netting,.....
Mending Stockings,....12.5.	.12.75	.....	.5.6
Bonnet Making,.....	} .3	.....	.....	.1†	.....	.....	.....
Hat Making,.....
Plating Straw.....
Shoebinding,.....4†..	.....	.2.	.1.
Hay Making,.....63.75	.....	.....
Picking Flock.....36...	.10...	.....	.05
Ward helpers.....18	.63	.39..	.....	.....	.....	.03
Cleaning Chapel.....1.

UNEMPLOYED.								
Too little mind .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.8.3	.....
Too low spirited.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Aged and infirm.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.4.	.....
Sick in bed,.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.12.3	.....
Sick.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.18.6.	.13.	.....	.066
Excited,.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.3.33	.1.75	.14.3	.....
Excited and secluded.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.066	.1	.....	.....
Quiet .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.57...	.52...	.....	.35.3
Able but unwilling,....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.15.6	.....

The numbers given in this table are the averages of patients employed through the year in the asylums of Surry, Sussex, Hampshire and Dorset, and for several specimen days or weeks in the others, and both forenoon and afternoons of all except Cheshire, and of some occupations excepted in the notes. Some of the asylum reports state the reasons of absence from labor, others do not. Some of the reports omit the occupations of the females, and some omit both sexes. But

* Forenoons only. † Saturdays only. ‡ Afternoons only.

from such as are within reach and state the facts, the following table is deduced, showing the proportion or percentage of all of each sex, that have been induced or were able to engage in any of the employments.

PROPORTION PER CENT. OF THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF PATIENTS EMPLOYED.

Asylum.	Number of years reported.	Percentage of all males.	Percentage of all females.	Asylum.	Number of years reported.	Percentage of all males.	Percentage of all females.
Bethlem,...	...5....	..71..	..68..	Norfolk,...	...1....	..52..	..79..
Birmingh'm	...9....	..62.5.	..73..	Prestwick,...	...1....	..58..	..73..
Bucks, ...	...1....	..72..	..69..	Rainhill, ...	...7....	..73..	..70.8.
Cheshire, ...	...3....	..86..	..65..	Stafford,...	...1....	..37..	..49..
Colney H'ch	...3....	..50..	.....	Somerset ...	...1....	..56..	.....
Devon,...	...8....	..77..	..72..	Surry .....	...6....	..58..	..60..
Edinburgh,	...1....	..95..	..80..	Sussex .....	...1....	..68.5.	..77..
Essex,...	...1....	.....	..42..	Wakefield, .	...1....	..57..	..71..
Hampshire,	...3....	..81..	..51..	.....	.....	.....	.....
Lancaster, .	...5....	..61..	..79..	.....	.....	.....	.....

The average of the fifteen asylums in which the proportion of both sexes employed is stated, is of males 67.2 and of females 69.2 per cent. Each of the thirteen reports of the Wakefield Asylum, from 1849 to 1851, says, "but few at any time unemployed."

The reports of other asylums speak of the employments, frequently specifying some by name, and many give a detailed account of the things that are made and of those that are repaired by the patients, without stating the number or proportion of those that have been at work.

It is the manifest policy of the British managers of the insane to give as much employment as possible to the patients, both for their own good and for the advantage of the asylums. Their reports show that two-thirds of the average insane populations of these institutions are occupied, and that they do most of the work necessary to keep the whole machinery of hospital life agoing, and repair it when necessary. They cultivate the land, make the roads, and shape the grounds; they make and repair furniture, they cook, scour, wash, iron and do all things which the house and household require for their sustenance and comfort. Dr. Holland, Superintendent of the Prestwich Asylum, says, in a letter to the Commissioners in Lunacy, [Rep. viii: p. 131,] "In addition to keeping the stocks

of furniture, bedding, and clothing, three-fifths of the original stock of bedding and clothing, and nearly two-fifths of the original furniture have been made entirely by the attendants and patients, beside which all the repairs of the asylum and a great many important additions and alterations, together with the cultivation of the land and formation of the pleasure grounds and airing courts, were last year executed by the same people, without any external aid whatever." Other reports speak of furniture, bedsteads, tables, chairs, ploughs, wheelbarrows, harrows, forks, &c., made by the patients. Some do even more than to supply their own wants. Staffordshire Asylum supplied another with shoes. The Wakefield Asylum does the washing for a training college. Almost all the furniture, chairs, bedsteads, mattresses, tables, wardrobes, bureaux, almost all needed articles that are usually made in shops were made in the school for idiots at Redhill, for a new insane asylum of about four hundred patients. The inmates of this idiot establishment include some of higher grade of intellect than similar institutions of the United States. Some are apparently not congenital idiots, but demented; some are merely simpletons. But they all, (as others of disordered or imperfect minds,) require teaching and direction; yet that school is provided with a great variety of mechanic shops, and many kinds of articles, some of nice workmanship, are made there.

The pupils in the Massachusetts school for idiots at Boston, make brooms, mats and shoes, which are good of their kind, and find a ready sale in the market, and thus they add something to the income of the establishment.

This system of employing men in the mechanic arts has been so long in operation in Great Britain, that it has ceased to be an experiment, but is accepted as a settled principle, so that the projectors of new asylums, include workshops, in their original plan, and provide them as certainly as they do lodging rooms and kitchens. These shops have become an essential part of the means of managing the patients. Dr. Cleaton, Superintendent of the Rainhill Asylum, near Liverpool, says, "I am fully persuaded that, next to the disuse of mechanical restraint,

the most important of recent improvements in the treatment of the insane, is the extent to which occupation is adopted as an auxiliary to the pharmaceutical remedies." [VIII: Rep. Com. in Lunacy, p. 130.] The influence on the patients, the workers themselves, is of the utmost importance. Those whose minds are sufficiently active, but prone to wander into delusions and indulge in imaginary creations of events and things and their relations, who admit or indulge misconceptions of the world, and dream of matters that have no existence, and those whose minds are morbidly excited, whose emotions are too lively, who are unnaturally elated, buoyant, depressed or perverse, and also the dull, the torpid, who only wish to be left alone, and be allowed to lie almost inanimate on the beds, settees or floors, or crawl into the dark corners, or sit or walk without thought or emotion, who have few or no wants or aspirations, beyond the gratification of mere animal appetites—all of these—almost all classes of the insane and demented and mentally defective, have been found to derive advantage from any regular and continuous employment, especially such as requires a series of successive operations, and more particularly if it requires their mental attention to guide their hands in the performance of their work.

While they are thus engaged, their minds are brought back from their wanderings, or down from their exaltations, or raised up from their groveling, to the common level and course, and applied to the active and sober realities of things which their hands move or effect, and for which they feel some responsibility, and consequently their disturbing emotions are, at least for the time, quieted and easy.

As no two particles of matter can occupy the same point in space, at the same moment, so no two absorbing thoughts or emotions can occupy the mind or heart at the same instant of time. So long, then, as those, whose minds are prone to wander in delusions, are engaged in mechanical or other employments, their thoughts must be given exclusively to the conduct and succession of natural events and real processes; and as the mind can not admit, or be possessed by, both the sane and the insane idea, the insane one must be excluded,

and the sane one reign paramount ; all the mental powers of the worker, which are in action for the moment are sane, and the mental disorder is for the moment, or that succession of moments, suspended. The sanity may be, and probably is, in most cases, broken and interrupted by insane thoughts and emotions. The attention to the work may be, and undoubtedly often is, uncertain and fitful, and interspersed with sudden temporary alternations of order and disorder. The man may look at and think of his shoe, his awl and his hammer, and bring them together for a second, and then let his crazed imagination carry his thoughts away into his delusions, or permit his morbid feelings to take possession of his soul, and absorb him in grief, or hate, or passion, or exuberant joy—but during the time, however short or long it may be, in which he is applying his awl to the leather, and lifting the hammer and striking the blow in the right place and with the intended effect, his mind must be given to the observation of those processes to see that they are conducted according to his plan ; and, of course, his thought is sane, his hands are performing a sane act, the cerebral as well as the muscular movements are of the same character, and so much sanity is thereby developed and manifested.

While the patients are thus occupied, they are relieved of the presence and pressure of irritating causes : they are better satisfied with themselves, for their morbid and distressing feelings are at rest. They are better reconciled to, or at least, they are not at internal war with, others ; their minds are acting and their emotions are flowing, in harmony with whatever they are then resting upon, and with whoever coöperates with them. There is then no jar within, no discord without, and for the instant, they are at peace with themselves and with the world.

The dull, the torpid, the demented, and those who are inclined to dementia, the fools and the foolish, may find some, perhaps great, even very great difficulty in rousing their minds to sufficient action, and giving their thoughts sufficient concentration to attend to and conduct any mechanical processes, and especially such as require continued and persevering attention. Yet

whenever this can be done by the patient alone, or by him with the aid of others, a great point is gained, of giving life and motion to powers that had been dead or dormant, and of developing action and even energy, where passivity and torpor had, in various degrees, prevailed. Dr. Skae, of the Edinburgh Asylum, says, "that those who had done nothing for years, but mutter to themselves and crouch in corners, now sew and knit from morning till night;" and the men whose previous history could be told in the same words, now work at shoe, basket or cabinet making, or other trades, in the shops, their eight or ten hours a day, and seem to enjoy the change, making their hours more pleasant to themselves and their whole lives more easy and comfortable to those who have the care of or associate with them.

These advantages are then, for a time, at least, gained by mechanical and indeed by any other labor—the excited mind is brought down to the even tenor of the natural being and life, so as to be and act in due relation to the discipline and quiet regularity of the moving world and nature. The perverse, the deluded, the vagarious, the whimsical, the crotchety, are led in straighter paths, in connection with their work, and in harmony with those who direct, and those who labor with them. And the inactive and stupid manifest a degree and a kind of life, in mind as well as in body. All these are steps in the progress towards recovery. They are, each one, in its own kind and measure, parts of that health which men and women enjoy abroad, and which the insane all need and desire to regain.

If then, these processes of labor can be repeated and continued, the steps towards health are multiplied, and the gain increases with the power of repetition and continuance. And if still further, the discipline becomes so established, that the excitable have no morbid exaltation of thought or feeling, the depressible no gloomy emotions or apprehensions, the disordered no wild imaginations, and the torpid no mental death, through all the hours of the day, while they are making shoes, sewing clothes, pounding iron, planing boards, weaving baskets or doing other kinds of work, the value of the gain is

without measure for the curable patient, who out of this may pass into a permanence of healthy mental and physical action, and for the incurable, who has thus secured his days of quiescence and regularity of spirit and life and a great alleviation of disturbance and distress, during his other hours of the day and night, when he is not at work.

The effect on the management of the asylums was very manifest; all the officers and attendants spoke of it with unvarying satisfaction. During the day, the patients being mostly in the shops and other places of labor, contented and sanely occupied, require no other care or supervision than that of the foreman or overseer, who is working with them; and when they return to the wards, their excitability having been expended in labor, they are glad to rest, and enjoy the quietness of the house. They feel happier in the thought, that they have done something as other and sane men do, they are therefore better satisfied with themselves and more reconciled to their position; and as they have been practiced to move in concert with things out of themselves and with other men, so their spirits are less subject to restless discord and antagonism with things and people around them. They are then more cheerful, contented, quiet and manageable, in the wards, in the shops, in the fields, and elsewhere, and the whole administration of the asylum finds less obstacles and more coöperation, and does its work with more ease and effect; its influence is more willingly felt, and the means of cure are applied to the disordered mind with more efficiency and success.

This is the result of the experiment in Great Britain, begun more than twenty years ago, and continued, with increasing extent and confidence, ever since. How far it can be adopted in the insane hospitals in the United States, is a matter for the serious consideration of those who have their management in their hands, but certainly it is a matter of intense interest both to those who would administer this great system of charity and science with the greatest ease and effect, and to those who should enjoy every facility of restoration if they are curable, and every means of diminishing their morbid excitability and distress and of lessening the burden of their disease, if they can not be restored.

